



Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

Car Chasing

Because canines are natural predators, many dogs love the thrill of the chase. Unfortunately, cars, minivans and bicycles aren't exactly traditional prey items for canines. Your dog could easily get injured should he attempt to pursue a passing vehicle.

Chasing behavior is largely instinctual in canines, especially in certain breeds of terriers, sight hounds and herding dogs. You won't be able to completely eliminate your pet's desire to chase, but it is possible to control this dangerous activity.

The easiest way, of course, is to cut off his access to the street. Do not leave your dog outside unattended and make sure that your yard has an escape-proof fence. And companion canines should never be allowed off-leash. No matter how well-trained your pet may be, accidents can, and do, happen.

If your dog is already an established car or bicycle chaser, try the following training technique. Secure your dog on a 10- or 20-foot lead. As your friend

slowly drives or bikes past, command your dog to "Sit." Offer him a food reward for sitting on command as the car or bike passes. Repeat this exercise several times, with the friend very gradually increasing speed. At the end of the session, give your dog a favorite toy. As a final step, as the friend moves past, throw the toy for your dog to retrieve in the opposite direction of the moving vehicle. The idea in this case is to distract him from the chase.

As you retrain, it's a good idea to assess your dog's current activity level. Is he getting enough exercise? If not, your dog may view car chasing as the perfect way to combat boredom and meet his exercise requirements. Be sure to get in two good walks every day, as well as some structured games - especially ones that involve an element of the chase, such as fetching. If he still persists, you may need to work with a professional to solve this difficult problem.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs, contact (602) 506-PETS or visit pets.maricopa.gov.

Excerpted from materials from The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

